



AKADEMIN FÖR HÄLSA OCH ARBETSLIV  
Avdelningen för arbetshälsvetenskap och psykologi

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# Employed today, unemployed tomorrow!

-Is personality characteristics associated with quantitative job  
insecurity among Swedish employees?

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2023

Examensarbete, Avancerad nivå (magisterexamen), 15 hp  
Arbetshälsvetenskap  
Masterprogram i arbetshälsvetenskap

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## Abstract

Employed today, unemployed tomorrow!

-Is personality characteristics associated with quantitative job insecurity among Swedish employees?

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Thesis work in occupational health science

University of Gävle

**Aim:** The study aimed to investigate if personality characteristics were associated with quantitative job insecurity among Swedish employees.

**Method:** This study implemented a cross-sectional design and a total of 157 employees participated in the study. Participants filled in an electronic survey consisting of 27 questions and the collected data was analyzed through one unadjusted and one adjusted regression analysis.

**Results:** The unadjusted regression analysis showed that personality characteristics were negatively associated with quantitative job insecurity, and the explained variance for personality characteristics on quantitative job insecurity was 14%. The results from the adjusted regression model showed that employment contract was positively, and personality characteristics were negatively associated with quantitative job insecurity, while seniority and qualitative job insecurity were not associated with quantitative job insecurity. Meaning that people with high values on personality characteristics and permanent employees were least affected by quantitative job insecurity.

In total, employment contract, seniority, personality characteristics, and qualitative job insecurity could explain 25% of the variance of quantitative job insecurity

**Conclusion:** Job insecurity is detrimental to both the individual and the organization and a strategy to counteract the experience of job insecurity might be to develop personality characteristics among employees.

**Keywords:** *Quantitative job insecurity, Qualitative job insecurity, Personality characteristics, Employment contract, Employees.*

## Sammanfattning

Anställd idag, arbetslös imorgon!

Är personlighetsfaktorer associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet hos anställda i Sverige?

Alexander Wejskog

Examensarbete i arbetshälsovetenskap

Högskolan i Gävle

**Syfte:** Denna studie syftade till att undersöka om personlighetsfaktorer var associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet hos anställda i Sverige.

**Metod:** Studien genomfördes med en tvärsnittsdesign och totalt 157 anställda medverkade i studien. Deltagarna ombads att fylla i en elektronisk enkät som bestod av 27 frågor och det insamlade materialet analyserades med hjälp av en ojusterad och en justerad regressionsanalys.

**Resultat:** Den ojusterade regressionsanalysen visade att personlighetsfaktorer var negativt associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet och den förklarade variansen av personlighetsfaktorer för kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet var 14%. Resultaten från den justerade regressionsanalysen visade att anställningskontrakt var positivt och personlighetsfaktorer var negativt associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet, medan arbetslivserfarenhet och kvalitativ anställningsotrygghet inte var associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet. Detta innebär att människor som skattar högt på personlighetsfaktorerna och tillsvidareanställda var minst påverkade av kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet. Totalt kunde anställningskontrakt, arbetslivserfarenhet, personlighetsfaktorer och kvalitativ anställningsotrygghet förklara 25% av variansen av kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet.

**Slutsatser:** Anställningsotrygghet är skadligt för både individen och organisationen och en strategi för att motverka upplevelsen av anställningsotrygghet skulle kunna vara att utveckla personlighetsfaktorerna hos de anställda.

**Nyckelord:** *Kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet, Kvalitativ anställningsotrygghet, Personlighetsfaktorer, Anställningskontrakt, Anställda.*

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## **Foreword**

Thanks to my supervisor Hans Richter for your support and thanks to all respondents that participated in the study.

Alexander Wejskog

May 2023, Västerås.

# Background

The labor market has changed rapidly due to increased globalization and competition among enterprises, resulting in outsourcing, more flexible employment contracts, and the downsizing of personnel. Technological development is also estimated to replace half of the human workforce within a decade or two, where transportation, logistics, and administration workers are most susceptible to being replaced by advanced technology (Frey & Osborne, 2017). Recent crises such as covid-19 have also impacted the labor market, increasing the unemployment rates equal to the financial crisis in 2010 (SCB, 2021). Amid the recurring changes also new employments arise, for instance, the gig economy is characterized by employment that is not protected by the labor law, and the employee is instead constantly required to use marketing as a source to receive more duties (Forte, 2019). Even though the labor market has recovered and reduced the unemployment rates in Sweden in the aftermath of the pandemic (SCB, 2022), new challenges arise in the societal economy with increased inflation and interest rates forcing organizations to restrain from investments, resulting in recession and layoffs of workers (Regeringskansliet, 2022). Also, more than half of the working population around the world express concern about losing their job within the next twelve months (Ipsos, 2020). It is therefore natural to conclude that the modern world is characterized by threats and amid all the threats is the worker trying to cope with all the dangers that are natural occurrences in a world where nothing remains stable and retained, but where alteration is in demand. The new order of the labor market has therefore brought a new danger to the surface, a danger that might be present in the everyday work of the employee, where the only word that is echoed in the head of the employee reflecting over his employment contract is as Sennett (1999) describes it, no long term.

## 1.1 Job Insecurity

Research on the area of job insecurity began to emerge in the 1980s when Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984, p.438) defined job insecurity as a “Perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation”. Job insecurity can be divided into four categories: A desire to maintain the work, the appraisal of a threat in the work, the loss of important features at work, and lastly the powerlessness and the inability to

cope with the situation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 2010). A distinction can be made between the objective view that the employment contract is considered insecure like temporary employment, or that there is a subjectively interpreted threat to the employment experienced by the employee (Låstad et al., 2016). It is the latter view that is at focus of this study. Many researchers have agreed to define job insecurity as a subjective experience relating to a worry to lose one's work (Kinnunen et al., 2014; Låstad et al., 2016; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999), other researchers have defined job insecurity as a condition between unemployment and work (Ergör et al., 2008) or as a subjective or external attribution of a threat (Ferrie, 2001). Job insecurity is also considered a stressor that is present in the daily work of the employee (Kinnunen et al., 2003, 2014; Llosa et al., 2018; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999) caused by the appraisal of an involuntary happening (Sverke et al., 2002) and the certainty that the work eventually will be dissolved (De Witte, 1999).

A central theory to describe the mechanisms behind job insecurity is the appraisal theory which offers good evidence of how the individual reacts to job insecurity. The appraisal theory can be divided into primary and secondary appraisal in which job insecurity first is portrayed as a threat and the individual begin to develop a primary appraisal of the situation and strategies to overcome the threat. Secondly, the secondary appraisal starts when the individual begins to realize that effort must be taken into account to overcome the threat, whereby the individual either has the resources to take control of the stressor or not, resulting in positive or negative stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Job insecurity is therefore a stressor that the worker needs to resolve to maintain control of the situation.



Table 1. The appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A framework to describe perceived job insecurity.



The experience of job insecurity may impact every employee as it can be triggered by organizational changes and downsizing (Kinnunen et al., 2014; Låstad et al., 2016), therefore no one is protected against the possible threat of job insecurity, although it is important to emphasize that individuals may be more or less adapted to cope with the feelings of job insecurity depending on individual differences to cope with stressors in everyday life (Kinnunen et al., 2014). Inconsistencies have been reported regarding gender differences and job insecurity where studies at one hand have found that men are experiencing more job insecurity compared to women (Barrech et al., 2018) or that job insecurity is more deleterious to mental health among men as opposed to women (De Witte, 1999; Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2016; Lo Presti & Nonnis, 2012). On the other hand, studies have also reported that women are suffering more from job insecurity than men (Låstad et al., 2014; Sulaiman et al., 2021). In summary, actual gender differences in job insecurity have not been proven according to meta-analyses and systematic reviews (Cheng & Chan, 2008; De Witte et al., 2016). Moreover, studies have also investigated age differences in job insecurity where older employees generally report lower job insecurity than younger employees (Keim et al., 2014; Lingmont & Alexiou, 2020). A study has found that employees between 30-50 years of age are most prone to experience job insecurity, as they might be in a transition in life demanding to provide support to their family and strive for promotion at work (Lo Presti & Nonnis, 2012).

Concerning employment contract, most of the evidence has shown that temporarily employed suffers more from job insecurity than those permanently employed (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Giunchi et al., 2019; Kinnunen et al., 2014; Näswall et al., 2005), but a systematic overview found no differences in job insecurity among temporarily employed and permanently employed (Virtanen et al., 2011). In summary, the evidence strengthens job insecurity as a complex phenomenon affecting employees independent of gender, age, and employment contract. Since employment contract is a variable that often appears in research on job insecurity, it will be used as a control variable in the present study. It is less evident how seniority is related to job insecurity, only one study to the author's knowledge has found that longer work experience contributes to increased job insecurity, but the results were reported from a cross-sectional study performed in the US and India where it is plausible that labor legislation

is different in contrast to Europe (Lingmont & Alexiou, 2020). In Sweden older employees with work experience are more protected by labor legislation, meaning that the latest employee entering the workplace is also the first employee being dismissed if layoffs of workers are inevitable (SFS, 1982:80). This may likely affect the perceived job insecurity being reported, whereby seniority will also be presented as a control variable in this study.

Job insecurity can be divided into qualitative and quantitative, and these dimensions are at focus in the present study. Qualitative job insecurity is the worry that some valuable features at work will be lost, such as qualified work tasks or salary development whereas quantitative job insecurity refers to the perceived threat to lose one's work (Hellgren et al., 1999). As the recession may deplete organizational investments, resulting in cautious planning of economic resources (Regeringskansliet, 2022), it is not unlikely that organizations eventually terminate parts of their workforce, lowering the expenses of the enterprise. Therefore, it is suggested that quantitative job insecurity is a predominant element in the contemporary age as opposed to qualitative job insecurity. Additionally, the quantitative dimension of job insecurity will be the dependent variable of interest in the present study, whereas the qualitative dimension of job insecurity is defined as a confounding variable in the study.

## 1.2 How job insecurity affects employees

It is important to understand how job insecurity affects employees as many workers may be influenced by feelings of job insecurity today, hence it may contribute to the perceived stress that is surrounded by modern working life. Many studies in the field have investigated job insecurity with general mental health measures such as GHQ-12 (General health questionnaire) and found that job insecurity is a stressor that has detrimental effects on mental health (Caroli & Godard, 2016; Emberland & Rundmo, 2010; Giunchi et al., 2019; Näswall et al., 2005; Rönnblad et al., 2019; Selenko & Batinic, 2013). A systematic review including longitudinal studies has addressed a research gap and an increased need to investigate specific work-related health outcomes that arise due to job insecurity and concludes that job insecurity is not affecting the mental health of the employee immediately, but rather over time (De Witte et al., 2016),

a view that has been confirmed in other studies linking job insecurity to detrimental health effects over time (Burgard et al., 2009; Griep et al., 2021; Sverke et al., 2002).

However, more specific outcomes have linked job insecurity to emotional exhaustion (Blom et al., 2018; Callea et al., 2019; Kinnunen et al., 2014; Nikolova et al., 2019) increased anxiety and depression (Burgard et al., 2009; De Witte, 1999; Ergör et al., 2008) decreased concentration at work due to enhanced irritation (Van Hootehem et al., 2019) and more somatic constraints such as headache, skin problems, and eye strain (Caroli & Godard, 2016) but regarding somatic constraints, there are adverse findings that support that job insecurity do not contribute to somatic constraints (Ashford et al., 1989). A meta-analysis found the strongest association between job insecurity and depression (Llosa et al., 2018). Most severe is that job insecurity has been linked to an increased risk of committing suicide, and this was found after controlling over 65,0000 patient registers, but job insecurity was only measured with one item that eventually under- or overestimated the association between job insecurity and suicide (Blomqvist et al., 2022). Some researchers have argued that job insecurity results in worsened mental health and tested reversed associations and found that subsequent mental health might also contribute to job insecurity over time (Griep et al., 2021; Urbanaviciute et al., 2019).

In summary, job insecurity harms mental health outcomes which have been confirmed in both cross-sectional studies (Ashford et al., 1989; Caroli & Godard, 2016; De Witte, 1999; Emberland & Rundmo, 2010; Ergör et al., 2008; McDonough, 2000) as well as longitudinal studies (Kinnunen et al., 2014) and meta-analyses and systematic reviews (Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2016; Llosa et al., 2018; Rönnblad et al., 2019; Sverke et al., 2002). Therefore, it is reasoned that job insecurity is a stressor that induces an obnoxious impact on mental health, but it is still not elucidated when job insecurity affects mental health, it is suggested that job insecurity is harmful to health in the long term (De Witte et al., 2016; Sverke et al., 2002). Hence, when job insecurity affects mental health may depend on individual characteristics as people are prepared to struggle against stressors in everyday life.

### 1.3 How job insecurity affects organizations

One of the core features of the employment contract lies in the obligations between the employer and the employee which has been characterized as a psychological contract. The psychological contract consists of relational and transactional demands where relational demands feature employment security from the employer in exchange for effort from the employee, whereas the transactional demand consists of salary in exchange for performed work (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006). People who suffer from job insecurity are inclined to believe that the psychological contract between employer and employee has been breached (Griep et al., 2021; Låstad et al., 2016), but job insecurity is mainly related to a breach in relational demands where the employer cannot provide employment security in exchange for a performance from the employee (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006), thus resulting in a diminished engagement of the employee for the work tasks and the organization (Låstad et al., 2016). Studies have also shown that job insecurity adheres to an increased turnover intention among employees (Ashford et al., 1989; Kinnunen et al., 2014), and employees independent of economic needs and degree of employability are more inclined to leave the organization if experiencing job insecurity (Sora et al., 2010). On the contrary, studies have also shown that job insecurity does not contribute to an increased turnover intention among employees (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010), but a meta-analysis has strengthened the evidence showing that job insecurity is positively related to an increased turnover intention and the positive association was stronger among younger employees with shorter tenure as opposed to older employees with more work experience (Cheng & Chan, 2008).

Job insecurity also depletes work satisfaction and engagement to work among employees (Asfaw & Chang, 2019; Ashford et al., 1989; Callea et al., 2019; Cheng & Chan, 2008; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Emberland & Rundmo, 2010; Näswall et al., 2005; Sora et al., 2010), hence, a decreased work satisfaction is a short-term consequence affecting the employee immediately after being exposed to job insecurity (Sverke et al., 2002). However, results are mixed regarding the relationship between job insecurity and employee performance where some studies have shown that perceived job insecurity does not contribute to a decreased performance at work (Ashford et al., 1989; Sverke et al., 2002), whereas other studies have confirmed that job insecurity

negatively influences job performance (Cheng & Chan, 2008; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Sverke et al., 2019). In conclusion, the evidence suggests that not only individuals are suffering from the consequences of job insecurity but organizations likewise. It is a crucial concern for organizations to counteract the perceived job insecurity among employees as enduring competition among enterprises and generating profit are essential constituents of the modern labor market, which are constituents that might not be met by insecure workers. Therefore, organizations must develop a framework to oppose the feelings of job insecurity among workers. Could this be accomplished by strengthening personality characteristics among employees?

#### 1.4 How job insecurity can be prevented

Personality characteristics have been suggested as a buffer against the negative consequences of job insecurity. One aspect of personality that has received increased attention over the years is core self-evaluations (CSE), which can be defined as assessments that people make of themselves and their ability to operate in the world (Judge et al., 2004). People are either having positive (high) core self-evaluations meaning that they are in more control of their lives or negative (low) core self-evaluations which is synonymous with less control and less functioning in the world (Judge et al., 2004). It is a universal personality trait that consists of self-esteem (View of oneself), generalized self-efficacy (the belief that challenges are possible to overcome), locus of control (the belief that setbacks are within one's control-internal locus of control, or outside one's control-external locus of control), and emotional stability (not easily stressed) (Judge, 2009). In this essay, core self-evaluations will be referred to as personality characteristics to facilitate understanding the construct.

There seems to be plausible to believe that the factors of personality characteristics might be an asset to cope with different exposures in everyday life. A systematic review has addressed a research gap as the factors of personality characteristics have not been thoroughly examined with job insecurity (Låstad et al., 2016). Earlier studies have mostly focused on studying the factors of personality characteristics in isolation together with job insecurity. Individuals with low self-esteem are generally experiencing more job insecurity (Kinnunen et al., 2003; McDonough, 2000), but as job insecurity increases among employees the protective function of self-esteem expires

(Callea et al., 2019). Studies have also found that individuals with high performance-based self-esteem are more vulnerable to job insecurity than individuals with lower performance-based self-esteem, but the results need to be carefully interpreted as the correlation between performance-based self-esteem and job insecurity was weak  $r=.11$  (Blom et al., 2018). Moreover, locus of control has also been studied in isolation and research has found that an external locus of control is positively related to job insecurity (Ashford et al., 1989; Näswall et al., 2005), and a meta-analysis has on the other hand confirmed that an internal locus of control decreases the perceived job insecurity (Keim et al., 2014). Also, it has been concluded in earlier studies that job insecurity is negatively correlated to self-efficacy, but the results are somewhat dubious as the findings were obtained from cross-sectional studies (Lau & Knardahl, 2008; Lo Presti & Nonnis, 2012). On the other hand, it has been concluded that self-efficacy is unrelated to job insecurity, but if complemented with self-esteem the association with job insecurity is negative (Adewale et al., 2019). This, in turn, suggests that personality characteristics should be studied in unity rather than in isolation providing more perspicuous evidence between job insecurity and personality.

There exists research that has studied all dimensions of personality characteristics together with work-related outcomes, stress, or job insecurity, where studies on personality characteristics found evidence that it may contribute to increased life- and work satisfaction (Judge et al., 1998), but only if supplemented with low job insecurity (Hsieh & Huang, 2017). Personality characteristics might reduce work-related stress, although evidence is presented from a cross-sectional study (Brunborg, 2008). However, personality characteristics exercise a negative association with job insecurity (Dong et al., 2020; Sulaiman et al., 2021; Ugwu et al., 2021), and the only study to the author's knowledge linking personality characteristics to qualitative and quantitative job insecurity have found that personality characteristics are negatively associated with both dimensions of job insecurity (Låstad et al., 2014). Individuals scoring high on personality characteristics are also more adapted to their careers, though the effect is reduced if preceded by high job insecurity (Yoo & Lee, 2019). Albeit studies have been conducted investigating the association between job insecurity and personality characteristics empirical support is yet scarce and more research is needed on the area. The present study is striving to shed new light on job insecurity research by adding

personality characteristics to the quantitative dimension of job insecurity, attempting to accommodate the knowledge gap in the area.

## 1.5 Problem formulation

Organizations need to hamper the effects of job insecurity among their employees as it may contribute to the daily stress that is a natural constituent of modern working life. Job insecurity is stressful since it refers to the future and the uncertainty to keep the work (Kinnunen et al., 2003). An experience that profoundly impacts mental health, particularly when the threat of job insecurity might be as harmful to health as unemployment (De Witte, 1999; Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2016). Organizations are forced to be profitable in the contemporary age striving for economic growth, requirements that might be assessed as a utopia by insecure workers, that contrariwise are more uncommitted to work if suffering from job insecurity (Låstad et al., 2016). An antidote to the detrimental influence of job insecurity may be assigned to personality characteristics as it diminishes stress (Brunborg, 2008) and is negatively associated with the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of job insecurity (Låstad et al., 2014). Research on the area is yet scanty, especially as most of the research has studied personality characteristics in isolation and not as a universal trait. Additionally, personality characteristics are also malleable, meaning that they can be improved through interventions by the management (Pignatelli, 2014). Therefore, the results from the present study may be used by the management as a framework to strengthen employee personality characteristics in attempting to counteract the feelings of job insecurity among workers.

## 2. Aim

This study aims to examine if personality characteristics are associated with quantitative job insecurity among employees at different workplaces in Sweden.

### 2.1 Research question

The following research question is addressed in this study:

1. Is personality characteristics associated with quantitative job insecurity?

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Design

This thesis implemented a cross-sectional design to measure the variables of interest. The core features of a cross-sectional design are that it measures the dependent and independent variables at the same time (Setia, 2016). Due to time constraints, selecting a cross-sectional design was advantageous as this type of study could be performed quickly and was useful to gain information about the prevalence of an outcome before establishing more sophisticated research methods such as cohort studies (Setia, 2016). The study used short validity and reliability tested scales to capture the variables included in the study as more participants might have considered answering the survey if it remained short. Requests to participate in the study were sent to groups on Facebook containing social workers and workers upholding a bachelor's or master's degree in behavioral sciences. Additionally, participants were recruited by e-mail by screening the internet for eligible employers. In total 163 participants completed the survey, but six participants were excluded as they had been absent from work during the latest 12 months resulting in a final sample of 157 participants.

### 3.2 Selection of Participants

At first, the survey was pilot tested and distributed to three locksmiths that were at hand for the author as the questions in the survey needed to be validated and controlled before being handed out to eligible participants. The pilot study was performed in March 2023 and indicated that no changes had to be made in the survey as the items were easy to reply to. Recruitment of participants was twofold, where participants either were recruited on Facebook or through e-mail distributed by the management. Eventually, twenty managers or HR sections were contacted by e-mail between the 28<sup>th</sup> of March and the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, mainly operating in the social and behavioral field, educational system, health care and the banking industry in Sweden. Permission to gather data was approved by the management from two workplaces (Appendix 1) on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. Also, requests were sent on Facebook to groups of social workers and behavioral scientists on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March and a reminder was sent on the 11<sup>th</sup> of



April 2023. The stakeholders were presented with the informal letter, together with the letter of consent, informing about the aim of the study and the criteria of inclusion and exclusion before either accepting or rejecting to participate in the study (Appendix 2). The stakeholders who accepted to participate in the study received the link to the survey.

The inclusion criteria demanded that participants worked part-time as a minimum as they were more connected to the workplace and were more likely to experience work stressors than hourly workers. The criteria for exclusion on the other hand was determined to exclude employees that had been absent from work for more than three months due to sick leave, parental leave, or other permissible grounds for absence during the latest year as they might be less affected by job insecurity compared to employees with a higher presence at work. Job insecurity is a stressor that might affect workers independent of occupation, therefore no restriction to a specific work was made in the present study. The sample was based on a convenience sample due to time constraints but still had the potential to allow statistical testing (Stratton, 2021). However, the results from this study can hardly be generalized to other populations as the representativeness in the sample is unknown and likely not fulfilled (Stratton, 2021). The study aimed to find as many participants as possible and had clearly stated inclusion and exclusion criteria which may be perceived as a strength in the selection of a convenience sample (Stratton, 2021).

To avoid huge attrition rates the study aimed to recruit as many eligible participants as possible, and reminders were also sent to all participants within two weeks, where participants who already had answered the survey could disregard the reminder (Bhandari, 2021). The social worker and behavioral science groups on Facebook had nearly 26,000 members of which 130 answered the survey giving an attrition rate of 99.5 %. Additionally, two workplaces consisting of teachers from a high school and a bank participated in the study with approval from the management. There were 40 employees at the first workplace and from the personnel, ten participants answered the survey giving an attrition rate of 75 %. The second workplace had 70 employees of which 17 answered the survey giving an attrition rate of 76%.

### 3.3 Literature search

A literature search was performed in APAPSYCINFO on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2023. The inclusion criteria were articles published between 2000-2023, peer-reviewed articles, earlier cited articles, available in full text, and articles written in English. Also, the included articles were required to measure at least one dimension of personality characteristics together with job insecurity. Boolean operators were inserted and the search string consisted of: (“Perceived job insecurity” OR “employment uncertainty” OR “job insecurity” OR “quantitative job insecurity” OR “qualitative job insecurity”) AND (“core self-evaluations” OR “Personality” OR “Personality dispositions” OR “Personality characteristics” OR “locus of control” OR “affectivity” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-efficacy”) AND (“employ\*” OR “work\*” OR “blue-collar work\*” OR “white-collar work\*”). In total, 191 hits were obtained, and every article was screened according to the title, whereby 80 articles were screened according to the title and abstract, and finally, 13 articles were retrieved that met the inclusion criteria.

Additionally, a literature search was performed in SCOPUS on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 with the same inclusion criteria as in the former literature search on APAPSYCINFO. The search string consisted of: (“Perceived job insecurity” OR “job insecurity” OR “quantitative job insecurity” OR “qualitative job insecurity”) AND (“core self-evaluations” OR “Personality” OR “Personality dispositions” OR “Personality characteristics” OR “locus of control” OR “affectivity” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-efficacy”) AND (“employ\*” OR “work\*” OR “blue-collar work\*” OR “White-collar work\*”). In total, 3357 articles emanated from the literature search when adjusted for the inclusion criteria. To manage all registered hits the first 600 articles were screened according to the title, whereas 104 articles were screened according to both the title and abstract, thus selecting 14 articles that met the inclusion criteria.

Moreover, articles were also retrieved from a literature search on discovery by searching for meta-analyses and systematic reviews on the area. Finally, a chain search was initiated in which reference lists were screened on key articles with a high impact on the field measured by the total number of earlier citations (articles with more than 100 citations were screened).

### 3.4 Measures

The survey was constructed in “sunset survey” and consisted of a total of 27 items, of which eight items were background variables and the remaining 19 items were obtained from validity and reliability tested scales (Appendix 3).

#### 3.4.1 Independent variable

To measure *personality characteristics* the 12-item core self-evaluations scale was used developed by (Judge et al., 2003). Core self-evaluations measure a single trait consisting of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (Judge, 2009). Since the scale was not available in Swedish a back-translation was performed by a person with excellent skills in English. Half of the items were reversely coded, and examples of items included in the scale were: “I complete tasks successfully” and “I determine what will happen in my life”. Participants were requested to select between five options on a Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. A sum index for the core self-evaluations scale was computed in SPSS where the highest possible score was 60 and the lowest possible score was 12, in which higher values on the scale were synonymous with higher core self-evaluations. In the present study, core self-evaluations were set at the scale level and Cronbach’s alpha for the core self-evaluations scale was .82 in the present study, a Cronbach alpha that was consistent with earlier measures of the scale (Judge et al., 2003).

#### 3.4.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable *quantitative job insecurity* was measured by a three-item subscale developed by (Hellgren et al., 1999). Respondents were instructed to select between five alternatives ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. An example of an item included in the subscale was: “I am worried that I might lose my work”. A sum index was computed for the quantitative job insecurity subscale in SPSS and the highest possible score was 15 and the lowest possible score was three, in which higher values on the subscale indicated higher quantitative job insecurity. E-mail contact was initiated with the researchers that had developed the scale (Hellgren et al., 1999) in February 2023 to gain access to the Swedish version of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of job insecurity since the scale was only available in English on

the Internet. The quantitative dimension of job insecurity was set at the scale level and Cronbach's alpha for the quantitative job insecurity subscale was .94 in the present study. The Cronbach's alpha value was considerably higher in the present study than in former research where a value of .79 was obtained (Hellgren et al., 1999).

### 3.4.3 Control Variables and Confounders

Demographic variables were added to the survey, including gender information, age, education, seniority, employment contract, work hours per week, absence from work during the latest year, and union membership. In the present study *seniority*, *employment contract*, and *qualitative job insecurity* were treated as control variables for *quantitative job insecurity*. In the data collection, the employment contract was coded with 0=temporary employed, 1=part-time employed, and 2=permanent employed and it was measured at a nominal level. Seniority was measured by asking participants to report the total years they had been working. Seniority was set at scale level as the variable could obtain any value. To measure the confounding variable of qualitative job insecurity a validity and reliability tested scale was used that contained four items, where participants selected between five options ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The qualitative job insecurity subscale was developed by (Hellgren et al., 1999). Two of the items were reversely coded and an example of an item included in the subscale was: "I am worried over my pay development in the future". A sum index for the qualitative job insecurity subscale was computed in SPSS and the highest possible score was 20 and the lowest possible score was four, in which higher values on the subscale were similar to increased qualitative job insecurity. The qualitative dimension of job insecurity was set at the scale level and Cronbach's alpha for the subscale was .74 in the present study, a Cronbach's value equivalent to earlier measures with the subscale (Hellgren et al., 1999).

*Seniority*, *employment contract*, and *qualitative job insecurity* were included in the model to account for the eventual impact of confounding. A confounding variable is defined as a variable impacting the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, which might induce a false connection between the variables being studied (Pourhoseingholi et al., 2012). Most of the evidence suggests that permanent employees are less affected by job insecurity than those temporarily employed (e.g., De

Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Kinnunen et al., 2014). It was therefore natural to include employment contract as a control variable to investigate the potential impact of confounding. In the analyses, both temporary and part-time employees were coded into the same category=1 and consisted of 37 participants as these groups of employees were closely related regarding mean values on quantitative job insecurity, and they were compared against 120 permanent employees coded with 0. Also, seniority was included as a potential confounding variable since work experience might be a protective factor when it comes to work-related terminations of workers in Sweden (SFS, 1982:80). Earlier studies have also found a positive association between quantitative and qualitative job insecurity (Callea et al., 2019), therefore it was legitimate to include qualitative job insecurity as a potential confounder to the quantitative dimension of job insecurity.

## 3.5 Analysis

### *3.5.1 Descriptive statistics*

The analysis was performed using SPSS version 27. At first, descriptive statistics were computed to provide information about the background variables and the prevalence of quantitative job insecurity in the sample.

### *3.5.2 Unadjusted regression analysis*

Moreover, one unadjusted and one adjusted regression analysis with the enter method was performed in SPSS to answer the research question. The following assumptions to use a regression analysis were considered: 1) The predictor and outcome variable was measured quantitatively 2) There exists variance between the predictor variables 3) No multicollinearity was reported 4) The variance between the residuals was held constant 5) Independent errors 6) The residuals were normally distributed 7) There exists a linear relationship between the predictor and outcome variable (Field, 2009).

Assumptions to use a regression analysis were controlled by scatterplots, histograms, and by controlling multicollinearity with variance inflation factor, independent errors were controlled by the Durbin-Watson test, and outliers were controlled by Mahalanobis distance (See appendix 4). In the unadjusted regression model, core self-evaluations were added and acted as a predictor, whereas quantitative job insecurity was used as an outcome variable.

### 3.5.3 Adjusted regression analysis

In the adjusted regression model *employment contract*, *qualitative job insecurity* and *seniority* were included as control variables to test for the potential effect of confounding. Hence, the adjusted regression model added *control variables* and *core self-evaluations* to test their contribution to the dependent variable *quantitative job insecurity*. The  $R^2$  value was estimated to detect the explained variance in the model. In the regression model unstandardized coefficients, mean errors, confidence intervals with 95 % precision, and the level of significance were investigated, and the significance level was set at  $p < .05$  in the present study.

### 3.6 Ethical considerations

An application was sent to the ethical committee at the university of Gävle before collecting data from participants. The ethical committee examined the application and required minor revisions to be made (to clarify the information that was going to be sent to participants on Facebook) before giving their ethical approval to conduct the study. Managers were presented with the aim of the study and the ethical considerations that were considered before giving their permission to distribute the link of the survey to their employees (Appendix 1). Participants on Facebook were provided with an informal letter that presented the aim of the study and the approximate time to answer the survey, together with information that ensured that participants would be anonymous and could drop out and answer the survey whenever they had time (Appendix 2). Ethical considerations were considered by following the four ethical requirements in research: the information requirement, the requirement of consent, the requirement of confidentiality, and the utilization requirement (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). The information requirement was satisfied by adding emphasis on the voluntary nature of participation in the study. The requirement of consent was achieved by asking participants if they gave their admission to participate in the study. The requirement of confidentiality was met by informing participants that the responses were going to be anonymously coded in statistical software and that the collected data would be deleted after the study. Lastly, the utilization requirement was fulfilled by informing the participants that the collected data was only going to be used for the aim of the study

and not for commercial interests. They were also informed that the results from the study would be presented to the participants if desired.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

The survey was answered by 157 participants in total and no internal attrition could be detected in the sample. There were considerably more women than men in the study. The mean age was (M=37.20) and the average work experience was (M=15.95) in the sample. Most of the participants had a university degree and the majority had a union membership. Also, the sample consisted mostly of participants that were permanently employed. The remaining descriptive statistics can be seen in (Table 1).

*Table 1. A descriptive overview of the background variables.*

	<b>Total</b> <i>N=157</i>
	Quantity (N%)
<b>Gender</b>	
<i>Men</i>	19 (12%)
<i>Women</i>	138 (88%)
<b>Age</b>	
<b>Education</b>	157(100%)
<i>High school</i>	7(5%)
<i>University</i>	148(94%)
<i>Doctoral Degree</i>	2(1%)
<b>Work hours/Week</b>	
<i>0-20</i>	8(5%)
<i>21-30</i>	15(10%)
<i>31-40</i>	105(66%)
<i>&lt;41</i>	29(19%)
<b>Contract</b>	
<i>Temporarily</i>	18(12%)
<i>Part-time</i>	19(12%)

*Permanently* 120(76%)

**Work experience(year)**

**Union membership**

*Yes* 138(88%)

*No* 19(12%)

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Note: values are rounded off to whole numbers

Also, descriptive statistics for the quantitative dimension of job insecurity were computed in the sample together with descriptive statistics for employment contract on quantitative job insecurity as noted in Table 2.

*Table 2. Descriptive statistics for quantitative job insecurity.*

	Quantitative job insecurity			
	Total	Mean	MD	SD
	N=157	4.68 <sup>1</sup>	3.00	3.12
<b>Temporary employed</b>		6.72 <sup>1</sup>	5.00	4.15
<b>Part-time employed</b>		6.58 <sup>1</sup>	5.00	4.01
<b>Permanent employed</b>		4.05 <sup>1</sup>	3.00	2.41

<sup>1</sup>: Highest possible value on the subscale is 15

## 4.2 Inferential statistics

### 4.2.1 Unadjusted regression analysis

In Table 3 the results from the unadjusted regression analysis are summarized. At first, the overall regression model was significant ( $F_{1, 155}=24.47, p<.01$ ). The results indicate that core self-evaluations were negatively associated with quantitative job insecurity ( $B=-.16, p<.01, CI 95 [-.23, -.01]$ ), meaning that higher core self-evaluations contribute to lower quantitative job insecurity. Finally, the  $R^2$  value was .14 which indicates that 14 % of the variance in quantitative job insecurity can be explained by core self-evaluations, meaning that 86 % of the variance in quantitative job insecurity can be explained by other factors than core self-evaluations.

*Table 3. Unadjusted regression analysis.*

**Dependent variable: Quantitative job insecurity**



	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>95% CI</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Core self-evaluations</b>	-.16**	.03	<.001	[-.23,-.01]	.14

Note: \*\*=Significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

#### 4.2.2. Adjusted Regression analysis.

In the adjusted regression model the aim was to investigate if core self-evaluations were associated with quantitative job insecurity when employment contract, seniority, and qualitative job insecurity were included in the model. Table 4 summarizes the results from the adjusted regression analysis. Overall, the adjusted regression model was significant ( $F_{4,152}=12.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The results from the adjusted regression analysis show that employment contract was positively associated with quantitative job insecurity ( $B=1.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ), CI 95 [.61, 1.65], meaning that temporary and part-time employed experience more quantitative job insecurity than permanently employed. As noted in the table below seniority was not associated with quantitative job insecurity.

Core self-evaluations were again negatively associated with quantitative job insecurity ( $B=-.11$ ,  $p < .01$  CI 95 [-.19, -.04]. Qualitative job insecurity was not associated with quantitative job insecurity. Lastly, the  $R^2$  value in the adjusted regression model was .25, indicating that 25 % of the variance in quantitative job insecurity can be ascribed to the employment contract, seniority, core self-evaluations, and qualitative job insecurity leaving 75 % of the variance in quantitative job insecurity unexplained.

Table 4. Adjusted regression analysis.

**Dependent variable: Quantitative job insecurity**

	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>95% CI</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Employment contract</b>	1.13**	.26	<.001	[.61, 1.65]	.25
<b>Seniority</b>	.02	.02	.35	[-.02, .07]	
<b>Core self-evaluations</b>	-.11**	.04	.005	[-.19, -.04]	
<b>Qualitative job insecurity</b>	.12	.07	.09	[-.02, .27]	

Note: \*\*=Significant at the 1% level.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Result discussion

The present study examined if personality characteristics (Core self-evaluations) were associated with quantitative job insecurity. The research question was answered with one unadjusted and one adjusted regression analysis showing that personality characteristics were negatively associated with quantitative job insecurity in both the unadjusted and the adjusted regression analysis. In the adjusted model it was shown that employment contract was positively associated with quantitative job insecurity whereas no association was found between qualitative job insecurity and seniority with quantitative job insecurity.

The results from the present study are in line with earlier studies showing that personality characteristics are negatively associated with job insecurity (Dong et al., 2020; Hsieh & Huang, 2017; Sulaiman et al., 2021; Ugwu et al., 2021) and the result from this study also shows that personality characteristics were negatively associated with more specific constructs of job insecurity such as quantitative job insecurity as found in earlier studies (Låstad et al., 2014). One possible explanation behind the negative association between quantitative job insecurity and core self-evaluations may be assigned to the theoretical framework that job insecurity is a subjective interpretation of a threat to employment (e.g., Kinnunen et al., 2014; Låstad et al., 2016; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999), and individuals scoring high on personality characteristics are possibly more determined to cope and take action when dealing with stressors, thus the experience of job insecurity as illustrated by the appraisal theory results in positive rather than negative stress to the individual (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Earlier studies have also found an association between personality characteristics and problem-focused coping (Låstad et al., 2014) that presumably strengthens the assumption that individuals with robust personality characteristics are more oriented toward finding solutions when dealing with stressors that eventually mitigate the experience of job insecurity.

In the adjusted model it was shown that employment contract was positively associated with quantitative job insecurity, meaning that temporary and part-time employees were experiencing more quantitative job insecurity compared to permanent employees. The findings have been confirmed in earlier studies as temporary employees have been suffering more from job insecurity as opposed to permanent employment (e.g., Giunchi et al., 2019; Keim et al., 2014; Näswall et al., 2005). Temporarily employments are seemingly more insecure compared to permanent employment (Låstad et al., 2016) and it can be deduced from the labor market legislation as temporarily employed are more exposed to being terminated without having employment protection (SFS, 1982:80). Therefore, it is not surprising that the experience of job insecurity is of more concern among temporarily employed compared to permanent employed. Another possible explanation behind the elevated feelings of job insecurity among temporary and part-time employees may be assigned to socioeconomic status as individuals with temporary and part-time employment are having a lower socioeconomic status versus permanent employees (Keim et al., 2014). Thus, a sudden job loss is a setback to personal finances causing job insecurity to be an inevitable part of the life of a temporary or part-time employee. However, the results need to be carefully interpreted as part-time employees could be permanently employed or vice versa, and if adjusting for work hours per week the association between employment contract and quantitative job insecurity would possibly be more reliable. Consequently, work hours per week were not included as a control variable as it could increase the risk of multicollinearity in the regression model.

Seniority was not associated with quantitative job insecurity in the present study and the result suggests that increased seniority mildly raises the perception of quantitative job insecurity. The results point in the direction of another study (Lingmont & Alexiou, 2020) that showed that Indian and American workers with more work experience are experiencing more job insecurity in opposition to individuals with shorter tenure. The result is surprising as Swedish labor law offers increased protection to employees with long work experience governed by the principle of seniority (SFS, 1982:80). However, the current labor law gives the union and the employer room to negotiate and agree upon whom the employer wants to keep and terminate, thus the importance of the principle of seniority is fading (SFS, 1982:80), which may be a possible explanation to the result being presented. The result can also be interpreted from the view that higher

age is possibly related to increased seniority, and as the mean age in the sample was 37.20 years, many of the participants fell between the age group of 30-50 years that earlier have been found to suffer most of job insecurity (Lo Presti & Nonnis, 2012). Although age and seniority are not perfectly correlated it can only be reasoned that older workers probably have more work experience than younger workers, which in turn, eventually contrasts the findings from a meta-analysis (Keim et al., 2014) that found that older employees are generally not as receptive to suffer from job insecurity as younger workers. However, it is worth considering that there was not a significant association between seniority and job insecurity and a larger sample might induce another association between the variables of interest.

Lastly, there was a tendency of significance between qualitative and quantitative job insecurity. Earlier studies have proposed that qualitative and quantitative job insecurity are two different constructs of feeling insecure at work, where qualitative job insecurity reflects the worry to lose stimulating tasks at work or feeling uneasiness over absent salary development without necessarily losing employment, while quantitative job insecurity rather is a tendency to feel an overall worriment to lose work (Hellgren et al., 1999). One explanation behind the results is that qualitative job insecurity may be triggered in isolation without the presence of quantitative job insecurity (Urbanaviciute et al., 2021). For example, individuals might be conditioned to respond to organizational restructuring by worrying over prospective career opportunities in the organization without necessarily feeling concerned about losing the work.

## 5.2 Method Discussion

This study was performed with a cross-sectional design. In a cross-sectional design, the participants are invited to participate in the study based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria and both the independent and dependent variables are measured at the same time (Setia, 2016). One of the disadvantages of a cross-sectional design refers to the difficulty to find a causal relationship between the variables being studied (Setia, 2016). This means that the results being presented in this study that people scoring high on personality characteristics are experiencing lower quantitative job insecurity could likewise be presumed as if low scores on quantitative job insecurity contribute to higher scores on personality characteristics. Anyway, the cross-sectional design that was used

in the present study has detected the prevalence of quantitative job insecurity in the sample and displayed the statistical associations among variables, which may be a good basis for more advanced statistical research designs in the future (Setia, 2016).

The advantage of regression analysis is that it can be used to predict the value of an outcome variable based on one or several predictor variables (Field, 2009). The regression analysis was appropriate to answer the research question that aimed to investigate the association of personality characteristics with quantitative job insecurity and to investigate whether any confounding variables affected this relationship. One of the strengths of the study is that there were enough participants concerning included variables in the analyses. It is recommended to have between 10-15 respondents for every predictor variable (Field, 2009), and this assumption was met by finding 157 eligible participants responding to four predictor variables. On the contrary, only 14 % of the variance in quantitative job insecurity could be explained by personality characteristics, and 25 % of the variance in quantitative job insecurity could be explained by the control variables and personality characteristics altogether. A total  $R^2$  value of around .25 is consistent with a small variance explained by the included variables and values over .50 are preferred to strengthen the explanatory power of the predictive variables (Allwright, 2022). On the other hand, it is worth emphasizing that the study aimed to fill in a research gap as personality characteristics are a rather unexplored construct together with job insecurity (Låstad et al., 2016), which may explain the low explanatory variance in the present study.

The present study would have benefitted from using a purposive sample, but a purposive sample is often demanding and seldom not possible to use, whereby many studies are using a convenience sample (Andrade, 2021). The great disadvantage of a convenience sample is that it hardly can generalize the findings outside the sample (Stratton, 2021). The author sought to strengthen the selection of a convenience sample by striving to have a large sample size, to set up predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and to collect data on different occasions, which was satisfied by sending reminders and contacting employers at different points in time (Stratton, 2021). The external validity in the present study is low, meaning that the sample is not representative of all employees in Sweden (Andrade, 2021). There were mostly highly

educated individuals and a huge proportion of women who answered the survey, meaning that the results can only be applied to those who participated in the study, but the results cannot be generalized to male employees working in the industry in Sweden for example.

The attrition rate in the study was high as the attrition rate among the social worker and behavioral scientist groups on Facebook was 99.5 %. In addition, the attrition rate among the participants that were recruited by the two workplaces was 75% and 76%. Having an attrition rate of more than 30% introduces the risk of bias in the study (Babic et al., 2019). This could imply that participants agreed to answer the survey but only if experiencing low or high job insecurity respectively, which makes the findings in the study unreliable. The low participation rate could be explained by external factors such as the topic was not of concern to the employee, lack of time, or the participant did not receive the survey due to inactivity on Facebook or absence from work. Despite the high attrition rate among eligible participants there existed no internal attrition as there were no missing values in the survey among the respondents, and this may be regarded as a strength in the study.

The study used validity and reliability tested scales to measure the variables of interest. The core self-evaluations scale developed by (Judge et al., 2003) was not available in Swedish on the Internet and a back-translation of the scale had to be made. The process of back-translation may lead to an inappropriate translation between the original language and the intended language, and it also increases the risk of errors regarding spelling (Behr, 2017). The survey was pilot tested and distributed to three locksmiths who confirmed that the questions were easy to reply to, which might have counteracted the risks that are surrounded by back-translation. Also, Cronbach's alpha values of the included scales were pending between .74 and .94 in the present study, thus falling within the satisfactory range of .70 and .80 that is recommended in research (Bland & Altman, 1997). This, in turn, indicates that there exists internal validity in the study which may be perceived as a strength. Also, another strength is that empirical findings that were presented in this study have been confirmed in earlier research which might strengthen the internal validity of the present study.

Lastly, the risk of common method variance needs to be addressed in the present study. Common method variance refers to the tendency that a proportion of the variance is ascribed to the method of measurement rather than to the constructs that the measurements represent (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Common method variance may occur if the outcome variable and the predictor variable are introduced from a common source (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this essay, it is plausible that participants could have responded to the survey in a socially desirable way, not wanting to admit that they suffer from job insecurity. It is also possible that participants have responded to the survey questions with acquaintances which may give rise to artificial associations. Other sources of common method variance that might have affected the responses in the survey are if participants have responded to the questions in a positive or negative affect, thus it may contribute to inflated responses in the survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The threat of common method variance has been counterbalanced by emphasizing that the survey responses will be treated anonymously, where participants may have perceived that they could answer the survey honestly without anyone having the possibility to reveal their responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, it is important to highlight the importance of common method variance as the explained variance in the analyses might be elevated if common method variance is present as opposed to if common method variance is absent in the statistical analyses (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

### 5.3 Suggestions for further research

Job insecurity is a threat that may evolve into powerlessness as the individual cannot control the probability of losing employment (Ashford et al., 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, 2010). In the modern labor market, many employers are planning on implementing technological solutions to survive in an increasingly competitive market. The disadvantages of an increased accentuation on technological solutions are that employees eventually will experience more job insecurity as individuals cannot be certain to remain in their employment when work tasks become more automatized (Brougham & Haar, 2020; Gundert & Dengler, 2021; Lingmont & Alexiou, 2020; Nam, 2019). Studies in the future are recommended to investigate whether technological progress might contribute to job insecurity and how job insecurity triggered by automatization can be prevented. One suggestion is to link anxiety over technological development to personality characteristics to detect whether individuals scoring high on

personality characteristics are less concerned over automatization than others, or if permanent employees feel more secure in their employment as opposed to temporary employees when faced with the threat of automatization.

Also, studies investigating the qualitative and quantitative dimension of job insecurity is lacking (Callea et al., 2019) and more empirical studies are needed to determine the relationship between the variables. It is worth remembering that job insecurity is a complex area of research and inconsistencies on how to measure job insecurity adequately are still of concern today. Initially, job insecurity was only measured with one item (Ashford et al., 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984) which consequently leads to weaker associations between the predictor and outcome variable (Sverke et al., 2002). Therefore, research would benefit from using the qualitative and quantitative dimension of job insecurity in the future to measure job insecurity with more consistency. Studies in the future would also benefit from investigating employability among employees as employability can hamper the experience of job insecurity (Blomqvist et al., 2022; Kinnunen et al., 2014), and a recommendation would be to investigate what is demanded from the employee to experience more employability in the organization through interviews or interventions.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The results from the present study show that personality characteristics and employment contracts were associated with quantitative job insecurity. This implies that individuals scoring high on personality characteristics and employees with a permanent contract are least affected by quantitative job insecurity. The findings are not astonishing as earlier studies have shown that high scores on personality characteristics and permanent employment can buffer the influence of job insecurity (e.g., Dong et al., 2020; Keim et al., 2014). In a time when the labor market undergoes a constant transformation influenced by the corona pandemic (SCB, 2021) or by rising interest rates (Regeringskansliet, 2022) people might begin to wonder if their employment remains secure. It is vital to counteract the experience of job insecurity among employees as a prolonged experience of job insecurity is deleterious to mental health (De Witte et al., 2016; Sverke et al., 2002). Also, in the short term, the experience of job insecurity reduces engagement in work among employees (Sverke et al., 2002). Therefore, both



the individual and the organization are suffering from the consequences of job insecurity that eventually may transform competitive enterprises into bankruptcy or turn optimistic employees into hopeless victims attempting to cope in a world where employment security today transforms into employment insecurity tomorrow. As shown, one little step in the right direction to cope with the challenges of the new labor market might be to develop personality characteristics among employees as it may be a protective factor against job insecurity. However, on the macro level, the responsibility to deal with job insecurity in the labor market lies on the politicians (Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2016; Virtanen et al., 2011), that may use their authority to create more employment security on the labor market. Struggles should not be handled individually but through collective effort. The experience of job insecurity may be a pitfall for an individual but not a pitfall for a cooperative collective working to reduce the impact of job insecurity. “We can do so little on our own, together we can accomplish a lot”[Helen Keller, my definition].

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## Appendix 1



Till

Verksamhetsansvarig chef.

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Härmed ansöks om tillstånd att i ett examensarbete som ingår som en del i en utbildning vid Högskolan i Gävle söka uppgifter enligt den beskrivning som ges nedan. Vi önskar ditt svar senast 2023-04-17.

Kort beskrivning av studiens upplägg som är anpassad för verksamhetsansvarigs behov för att ta ställning till genomförbarheten i studien

Bakgrund (beskriv kortfattat vad som är känt inom området och vad examensarbetet förväntas bidra med)

Anställningsotrygghet är en stressfaktor i arbetet som kan leda till att anställda upplever ångest, utmattning och depression. Det är ett tillstånd där den anställde oroar sig över att bli av med sitt arbete och detta har visat sig ha skadliga konsekvenser både för organisationen och för individen. Bland annat har man funnit att anställningsotrygghet sänker arbetstillfredsställelsen och engagemanget i arbetet, vilket gör att organisationer får mindre produktiva medarbetare.

Detta examensarbete undersöker om personlighetsdrag kan reducera anställningsotrygghet hos de anställda. Denna uppsats lägger sin tyngdpunkt på personlighetsdrag som går att påverka såsom medarbetarnas självkänsla och självförtroende. Studien skulle kunna bidra till att organisationer bättre rustar sina

medarbetare att få en ökad tilltro till sig själva och till sin förmåga att hantera både motgångar och framgångar i syfte att reducera de skadliga verkningarna av anställningsotrygghet. Alla organisationer tjänar på att ha medarbetare som trivs på arbetet och som upplever sig säkra i sin anställning.

#### Syfte och eventuella frågeställningar

Syftet med studien är att undersöka om personlighetsdrag är associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet.

Syftet kommer att besvaras med följande frågeställning:

1. Är personlighetsdrag associerat med kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet?

Metod (Datainsamlingsmetod; beskriv frågeområdena vid planerad intervju och vid enkätundersökning bifoga frågeformulär, ange hur lång tid en intervju respektive besvarande av enkät beräknas ta för en deltagare, beskriv vilka personer som planeras ingå i studien samt tillvägagångssätt vid datainsamling.

Enkäten består av totalt 27 frågor. Deltagarna ombeds att uppge sitt kön, ålder, utbildning, arbetslivserfarenhet, genomsnittlig arbetstid i veckan, medlemskap i facket, anställningstyp och om de har varit frånvarande från arbetet mer än tre månader det senaste året. Vidare kommer deltagarna att få besvara 12 frågor som handlar om deras personlighetsdrag, fyra frågor som mäter kvalitativ anställningsotrygghet och tre frågor som mäter kvantitativ anställningsotrygghet. Enkäten kommer uppskattningsvis att ta cirka fem minuter att fylla i. Studien vänder sig till anställda inom socialtjänst, skolor, sjukvård och omsorg samt till anställda på banker.

- **Hjälp inför datainsamling** (Beskriv här vilken hjälp önskas från personal vid enheten tex för att identifiera studiedeltagare, ta fram registerdata eller utskick av enkät)

Mitt önskemål är att du som chef vidarebefordrar länken till enkäten till dina anställdas e-post adresser så att de ges möjlighet att besvara enkäten närhelst de har tid.

Etiska aspekter (**Beskriv utförligt** de etiska problem som identifierats och de åtgärder som vidtagits för att minimera dessa)

En etisk aspekt som uppdagas med studien är att deltagare ska besvara sin upplevda anställningsotrygghet, och detta kan föranleda en viss spänning eller obehag då det är en negativ upplevelse som medvetandegörs hos de anställda. Vidare kan fackligt medlemskap vara en fråga som är etiskt laddad och som ingår i enkäten. För att undanröja alla eventuella etiska risker så kommer all data att hanteras strikt konfidentiellt och deltagarna kommer att vara anonyma i undersökningen. Deltagarna kommer också att få lämna sitt samtycke till att delta i undersökningen innan de besvarar enkäten. Informationen ifrån deltagarna kommer inte heller att kunna härledas till någon individ eller organisation. Materialet kommer att hanteras på högskolans nätverk och är skyddat med lösenord för obehöriga. All information kommer bara att användas för studiens ändamål som är att skriva en magisteruppsats i arbetshälsovetenskap. Efter datainsamlingen och när uppsatsen är färdig kommer all lagrad data för studien att raderas.

Alexander Wejskog. Student

Hans Richter. Professor

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Handledares namn och tjänstetitel

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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Telefon och eller epost

Telefon och eller epost

Masterprogrammet i  
arbetshälsovetenskap

Akademin för hälsa och arbetsliv

---

Utbildning

Akademi

---

Tillstånd medges

Ja

Nej

---

Ort och datum

---

Underskrift och namnförtydligande

---

## Appendix 2.



Akademien för hälsa och arbetsliv

### **Förfrågan om att delta i en studie som undersöker anställningsotrygghet på arbetsplatsen i relation till personlighetsfaktorer.**

Anställningsotrygghet har visat sig ha skadliga konsekvenser för individens hälsa enligt flera studier och påverkar bland annat den anställdes engagemang i arbetet och arbetstillfredsställelse negativt. Det behövs fortfarande mer kunskap om hur man kan motverka eller mildra upplevelsen av anställningsotrygghet hos anställda på arbetsplatsen, i syfte att både anställda och organisationer ska kunna utvecklas och fungera bättre.

Syftet med studien är således att undersöka om personlighetsfaktorer har en inverkan på graden av anställningsotrygghet hos anställda.

Studien vänder sig till anställda på svenska arbetsplatser som minst arbetar deltid i sin tjänst och urvalet kommer att genereras via mejl eller telefonkontakt med chefer på arbetsplatser som uppsöks på internet, och enkäter planeras att distribueras digitalt till arbetsplatser som tackar ja till att medverka i studien. Vidare kommer även respondenter att rekryteras till studien genom två stora facebookgrupper som vänder sig till yrkesaktiva beteendevetare och socionomer där information om studien kommer att förmedlas.

Studien är ett examensarbete på magisternivå och är en del av utbildningen arbetshälsovetenskap vid Högskolan i Gävle. Studien kommer att genomföras med enkät under perioden 27 mars-21 april 2023. Enkäten kommer att ta cirka fem minuter att fylla i och berör din upplevelse av anställningsotrygghet på arbetsplatsen i relation till personlighetsfaktorer.

Kodnummer kommer att användas och detta används som stöd när en påminnelse kommer att skickas ut efter cirka två veckor den 11 april 2023. Enkäten går att nå digitalt på följande länk: <https://sunet.artologik.net/hig/Survey/13061>

Den information som du lämnar i enkäten kommer att behandlas säkert och förvaras inlåst så att ingen obehörig kommer att få ta del av den. Eventuell kodlista kommer att förvaras inlåst så att ingen obehörig kan ta del av den, kodlista och enkäter kommer att

förvaras åtskilda. Ingen annan än jag och handledaren kommer ha kännedom om deltagarens medverkan i studien.

Redovisningen av resultatet kommer att ske så att ingen individ eller arbetsplats kan identifieras. Resultatet kommer att presenteras i form av en muntlig presentation till andra studerande samt i form av ett examensarbete. När examensarbetet är färdigt och godkänt kommer det att finnas i en databas vid Högskolan i Gävle. Enkätsvaren och eventuella kodlistor kommer att förstöras när examensarbetet är godkänt. Du kommer ha möjlighet att ta del av examensarbetet genom att få en kopia av arbetet.

Deltagandet är frivilligt och du kan när som helst avbryta din medverkan utan närmare motivering. Ditt arbete kommer inte att påverkas om du väljer att inte delta i studien.

Härmed tillfrågas du om medverkan i denna studie. Enkäten kommer att vara tillgänglig digitalt under perioden 27 mars-21 april 2023, och efter den 21 april 2023 kommer länken att försvinna. En påminnelse om att besvara enkäten kommer att skickas ut den 11 april 2023.

Ansvariga för studien är Alexander Wejskog och Hans Richter. Har du frågor om studien är Du välkommen att höra av dig till någon av oss.

Om du är missnöjd med hur dina personuppgifter behandlas vänder du dig i första hand till högskolans dataskyddsombud som nås på [registrator@hig.se](mailto:registrator@hig.se). Om du fortfarande inte är nöjd har du rätt att ge in klagomål till Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten, som är tillsynsmyndighet.”

Alexander Wejskog

Student

xxxxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxxxx

Förnamn Efternamn

Student

Mail

Telefonnummer

Hans Richter

Handledare

xxxxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxxxx

### Appendix 3

#### 1.Kön

Man=0

Kvinna=1

icke-binär/annat=2

#### 2.Ålder

-----

#### 3.Utbildning

Grundskola=0

Gymnasium=1

Högskola=2

Forskarutbildning=3

#### 4.Genomsnittlig arbetstid per vecka

0-20=0

21-30=1

31-40=2

Över 41 tim/v=3

#### 5.Anställningskontrakt

Tillfälligt anställd/projektanställd=0

Deltidsanställd=1

Tillsvidareanställd=2

#### 6. Hur lång arbetslivserfarenhet har du totalt i antal år?

-----

#### 7. Jag har varit frånvarande i mer än tre månader från arbetet det senaste året.

Ja=0

Nej=1

#### 8.Medlem i facket

Ja=0

Nej=1

1. Jag är säker på att jag får den framgång jag förtjänar i livet 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
2. Ibland känner jag mig deprimerad (R) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
3. När jag försöker, så lyckas jag oftast med någonting 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.



4. Ibland när jag misslyckas känner jag mig värdelös (R) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
5. Jag slutför uppgifter framgångsrikt 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. Ibland känner jag att jag inte har kontroll över mitt arbete (R) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
7. I överlag är jag nöjd med mig själv 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
8. Jag tvivlar mycket på min kompetens (R) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
9. Jag bestämmer vad som kommer att hända i mitt liv 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
10. Jag känner inte att jag har kontroll över min framgång i min karriär (R) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
11. Jag är kapabel att hantera de flesta av mina problem 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
12. Det finns stunder då saker och ting känns dystert och hopplöst ut för mig. (R) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

1. Jag känner mig orolig för att bli uppsagd 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
2. Jag oroar mig över om jag ska få behålla mitt arbete
3. Jag är rädd att jag kommer att förlora mitt arbete

1. Jag tycker att mina framtidsutsikter inom organisationen är goda (R)
2. Mina möjligheter att hitta nya och utvecklande arbetsuppgifter inom organisationen är bra (R)
3. Jag oroar mig över min framtida löneutveckling
4. Jag oroar mig för att få mindre stimulerande arbetsuppgifter i framtiden

#### **Appendix 4**

The unadjusted model CSE and quantitative job insecurity

Durbin-Watson 1.919.

VIF 1.000

Mahal. Distance max 5.96

Adjusted model

Durbin-Watson 1.99

VIF

Core evaluations 1.58

Kval\_ans 1.49

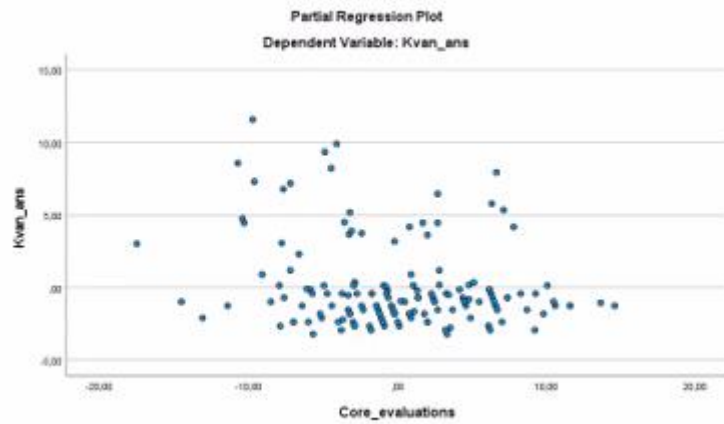
Anställningskontrakt 1.05

Arb\_erfarenhet 1.13

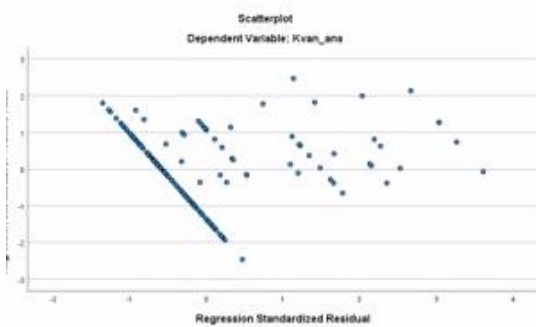
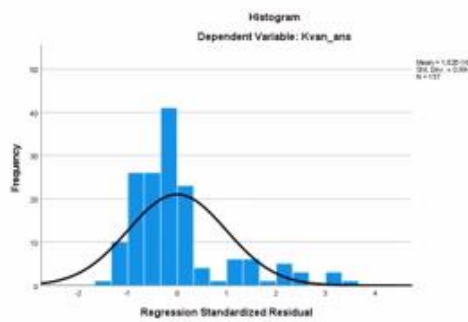
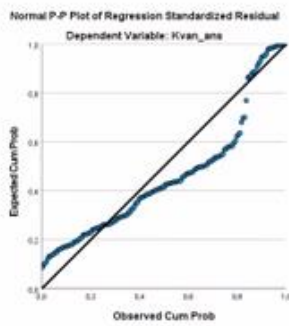
Mahal Distance max 14.46

The unadjusted model

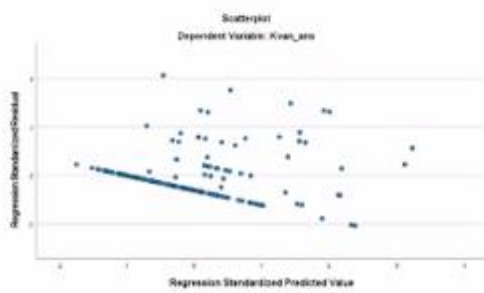
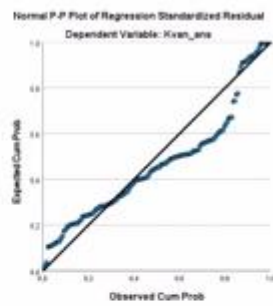
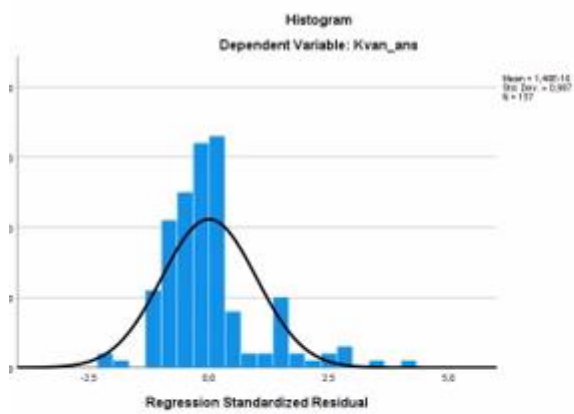
The connection between quantitative job insecurity and personality characteristics



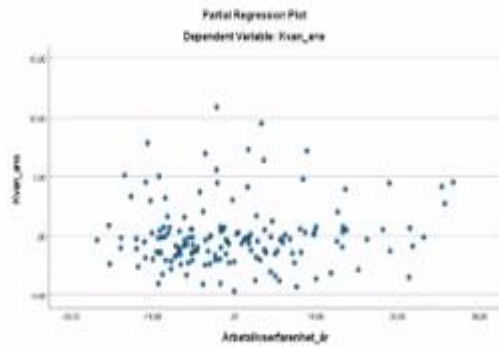
The unadjusted model



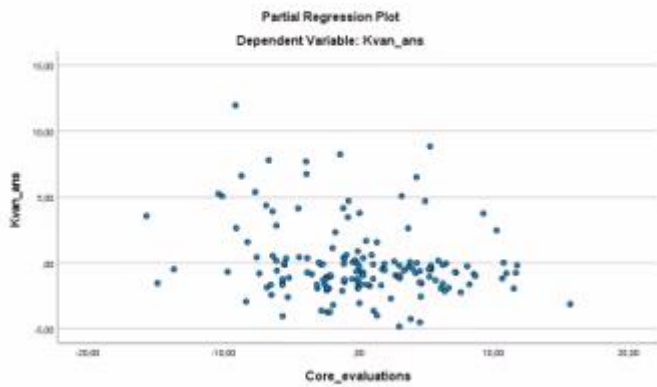
# The adjusted model



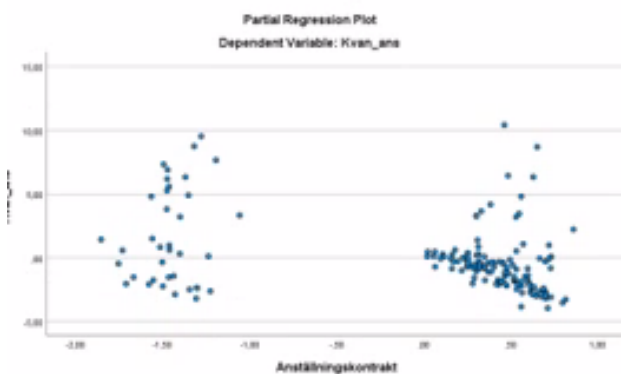
The connection between work experience and quantitative job insecurity.



The connection between personality characteristics and quantitative job insecurity.



The connection between employment contract and quantitative job insecurity



The connection between qualitative job insecurity and quantitative job insecurity.

